On the Unity of Scripture

1 Peter

By Luke Smith

On the Unity of Scripture: 1 Peter

2026, Luke Smith

This work is dedicated to the public domain (CC0) for the sake of the Gospel (Matt. 10:8). It may be shared, translated, and adapted, in whole or in part, without limit or permission. A digital copy of this work is available free of charge online.

https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/deed.en

"These men are not drunk, as you suppose."

Acts 2:15

Table of Contents

Introduction 7

1. The Greek of 1 Peter 11

2. The Closing Reference to Babylon 20

3. The Lack of Mention of Paul 25

4. Pauline Influence. 31

5. On Mentioning Elders 38

6. On Writing to Gentiles 40

7. The Lack of Original Quotations. 44

8. Peter and His Name 49

9. Posthumous Persecutions 52

Conclusion 55

Introduction

The Bible is one. It stands or falls together. Today it is attacked from all angles. The task before us then is to show its unity. I do not intend to be the trumpet for absolute literalism, yet one should at least be scared of changing the very words of Scripture. This is exactly what scholars try to do when they claim a book of the Bible was not written by the given author. There is no avoiding this simple fact. They say that the words should say something else. It is not my intention to change Scripture and so have set out to testify to the unity of God's Word and witnesses. Some will call this a biased beginning bound to a biased end. Yet, I am biased for Jesus and cannot help myself. I see around me the damage that the poking of holes in Scripture has done to the faithful and want to help them. Satan works in clever and varying ways, distressing the spirit as he roams and ranges the earth. Yet he always has his sights set on removing that large bronze pillar, the Bible.

Over time current scholarship has chosen to accept probabilities and possibilities as facts and certainties. This should not intimidate the lay reader of the Bible, however, because most of the original attacks on Scripture ended just as they were getting started. Truthfully, there are not that many. Subsequent

scholarship is mostly just an inbreeding of these ideas, resulting in uglier and uglier deformities until the original intent of study is lost in the desire for a complex theory to impress others with.

You will not find that here. Instead, I seek to simply show the reliability and light of God's Word. Medieval scholasticism tried to bury the Bible and today they try to rip it apart. My approach here will be to begin with what even the most skeptical Biblical scholar accepts as true. From building off of these facts it is my hope to show that these also testify to the veracity of those writings that are doubted. I take this approach since I hope to lead those who are lost in doubtful confusion to faith, but this cannot be done without a temporal compassionate compromise. If someone chooses to not accept what is Scriptural by argument, he is beyond the help of reasoning through Scripture. We as Christians must pray for the Holy Spirit to convert his heart and give him faith to understand the spiritual. It is impossible for an argument to do that.

I will also show that there is always an option for the Bible to be exactly what it claims to be. It is my goal to demonstrate that no one can prove that the Bible could not have existed. They would have done that by now if it were possible. In fact, this is what makes proving the Bible's historical progress difficult. It is because a writing falls within a range of dates, places, or audiences that all still preserve its historical existence and claims

that it is hard to lock down any one part of the Bible. This should be a reason for comfort but scholars take it as a license for any number of questions. They use their freedom not to be a servant to their neighbors but to raise so many convoluted and dissonant points that it is impossible to understand them. Really it seems the entire point is just to come up with the next shocking idea, no matter how outlandish.

Let us now turn to the facts of the case and lay down all the claims against Peter's authorship of 1 Peter. We will then handle them one by one showing that they are either false or hold no irrefutable claim on the Bible's history.

1. The Greek of 1 Peter, which is outstanding in the New Testament, is too good for an unlettered Galilean fisherman to have written.

2. Peter's lifetime would have been too early for the closing reference to Babylon.

3. If the letter is from Rome, why do Peter and Silvanus not mention Paul to the Gentile audience?

4. The letter is too much like Paul's.

5. Peter's mention of elders is out of place because Paul never mentions elders in his churches.

6. Peter should not have written to the Gentiles but only to the Jews.
7. The references to Jesus and his teachings lack the originality of one who personally knew him.
8. Peter would have written the letter under his given name, Simon.
9. 1 Peter refers to persecutions which only happened after Peter's lifetime.

1. The Greek of 1 Peter, which is outstanding in the New Testament, is too good for an unlettered Galilean fisherman to have written.

The argument is this: we know that Peter was "unlettered" and "uneducated" from Acts 4:13 and that he spoke in a distinct Galilean dialect which was recognizable to those in Jerusalem (Matt. 26:73 | Mark 14:70 | Luke 22:59). This is taken to mean that he was hardly a master of his own native Aramaic, let alone a second language. In addition, he was a fisherman, who scholars assume could not have been or become educated enough to write, let alone write in good Greek.

On the other hand, the Greek of 1 Peter has been called "the best of the New Testament." It is not what is called Atticist Greek, a revival of classical Attic Greek that happened contemporaneously with Peter as done by the sophists, but it is good Koine Greek which was common across the Eastern Mediterranean.

In order to address the question of how skilled Peter was in Greek, we need to construct a biography of him to understand his education. Sadly, Acts is sparse in its later information on Peter. Peter is mentioned in Acts 12:1-8 which is dated to A.D. 42-44. In A.D. 49 Peter addressed the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:7) and had a disagreement with Paul (Gal. 1:18). Finally, in

A.D. 55 it is clear Peter had influence over the Greek-speaking congregation as Corinth (1 Cor. 1:12), though he was not present.

Nearly everyone, faithful and unfaithful alike, agrees that Peter was martyred in Rome in the 60s. Eusebius gives the years A.D. 67/8 which Jerome later adopted and is the one we have by tradition. Some also give A.D. 64. Whichever one someone picks is not critical to determining the authorship of 1 Peter. What is agreed upon is that Peter died in Nero's persecution of Christians in Rome which began in A.D. 64 after the great fire.

This leaves us with about fifteen years unaccounted for (A.D. 49 - 64). To show that Peter had the time to learn Greek we need to find the earliest that 1 Peter could have been written. This must be done from an understanding of the greetings in the last chapter of Romans due to a lack of information otherwise. We know Romans was written in A.D. 55 and if Peter were physically there or was "in residence" there, Paul would have greeted him. But he does not. So, since 1 Peter was written from Rome, which I will prove later, the earliest it could have been written is A.D. 55. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that Peter was unable to learn Greek well enough to compose 1 Peter based on time. While there is no positive proof that he did, at the same time no one can argue that he could never have had the chance to have been educated enough. Any denial of Peter's authorship

of 1 Peter cannot be based on his inability to write it from a lack of education because of a lack of time.

In fact, it seems likely that an apostle would strive to learn Greek if he did not already know it. It was the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean World at the time: the common language of business and trade. Even well-to-do Romans, as dominant as their empire was, educated their youth in Greek literature before they were educated in their own. This means that a letter in Greek to the city of Rome would not have been out of place. Similarly, in the first century, the rulers of the Holy Land used Greek when governing since it was known by both the elite and variously by the common people. It was the logical choice for a bridge. This has led at least one author to say that in certain instances we surely have the untranslated words of Jesus. He particularly refers to Jesus' questioning by Pilate. What language would they have spoken to one another if not Greek?

If the Great Commission were taken seriously by Peter, spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth would have required him to branch out from his small fishing town origins. Aramaic could only get someone so far. One of the best ways to fulfill this command by Christ would be to learn Greek.

But who could have schooled Peter in Greek? This question really has to stay in the speculative because of the lack of any evidence of it happening to the positive or the negative. But

simply showing the possibility of a tutor will prevent any claims that Peter could not have learned Greek because of the lack of a tutor. Because the Christian church grew so quickly, it is impossible to pick out someone who could have served as a tutor. The Christians' numbers grew so rapidly that they could only keep track of the numbers, not the names. With all of this as context, I suggest that after Pentecost Peter could have easily had access to a Greek speaker to tutor him. From the regions listed we know that at least one of these men spoke Greek. There were at least 3,000 present, likely meaning nearly 200 people came from each place in the list. This, of course, would all mean nothing if we were told that all of the newly baptized went straight back home to spread the Gospel. Certainly some did just that. But Luke also tells us that "they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer." Communicating and communing with these new converts would have given reason enough to learn Greek as well as made native speakers consistently available.

Here someone may accuse me of circular logic: Peter communicated with native Greek speakers before knowing Greek. Again, I have to emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit here along with the fact that some of the 3,000 certainly did not just speak Greek. However, if we disregard these two major points, some have suggested as an alternative that Peter in fact

knew Greek from his occupation as a fisherman. Philip's name alone shows the prevalence of Greek influence in Peter's hometown of Bethsaida. In addition, being from Bethsaida suggests easier connection with Greeks (John 12:21). Therefore, Peter could then have picked up Greek in his trade. This is more speculative than anything else so far and is really quite useless because of the Holy Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost, but it at least gives some support to the idea that Peter and the land he came from had knowledge of Greek to begin with.

If someone doubts all of what has been said so far: that Peter had time to learn Greek, that he had the motivation to learn Greek, that he had access to Greek speakers, and that he grew up in a land where Greek was known and used, then it may be said that he doubts the truth of Pentecost. After all, its message is that the Apostles were able to communicate with those of different languages by the power of the Holy Spirit.

However, for the sake of being comprehensive, let us say that nothing that was just listed was true. If Peter was not sufficiently schooled in Greek, Silvanus (1 Pet. 5:12) is often presented as the solution. Christians know Silvanus, who also is given by the Greek version of his name, Silas, from a few verses: he was a Roman citizen (Acts 16:37), he was a letter writer for Paul (1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1), and he was a "leading man" in the Jerusalem congregation (Acts 15:22). He also traveled with Paul

on his second and third missionary journeys. These men both traveled extensively through the Greek world and while Paul could have in theory done it as the only member fluent in Greek, this assumption would reduce Silvanus to a mere token and not the full player we see him as in Acts. For example, both Silvanus and Paul are said to have spoken to the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:31). In addition, Silvanus stayed behind with Timothy at Berea where the members of the synagogue spoke Greek as shown by the inclusion of leading Greek men and women.

Based on this evidence, a solution to the good Greek of 1 Peter could be that Silvanus had a hand in its composition. This ranges from him simply polishing up Peter's rough Greek, like what happened with Josephus, to him writing down in Greek what was dictated to him in Aramaic, keeping the ideas but providing the language. Clearly this solution to the question of Peter's authorship based on the good Greek is not totally satisfactory. In fact, it produces many more questions. The most troubling is how much of the letter can claim to be from Peter. How much of it is apostolic?

But, like I said previously, if someone rejects all of the obvious marks of an apostle of Jesus Christ, this secretarial solution is not horrible. It does hang on one word though: διὰ. It is translated as "through" in the Berean Standard Bible and as "by" in the ESV.

What διᾰ means in reality has been scrutinized. Some have argued it refers to only serving as the letter carrier, referencing Acts 15:23. This would mean that Silvanus had no helping hand in the composition of 1 Peter, which is then used to support the argument that Peter did not write 1 Peter: he had no one with good Greek to do it. However, Eusebius does use διᾰ to mean the actual act of writing the letter (*Historia Ecclesia* 4.23.11). Then the counterargument is raised that he should then be listed as a co-sender at the start of the letter if he drafted the document. Afterall, this happens in Paul's letters. The issue with this thinking is that letters are specific compositions. Their time, audience, intent, authorship, form, and content all change based on one another. There are a whole host of reasons Silvanus' name was not added to the start of the letter even though he helped compose it. This is why it is dangerous to compare letters, even those of the same author. The same scrutiny could be applied to Silvanus' writing of Paul's letters. Why include him? What did he really do? How helpful was he really?

Finally, it is important to remember that the Greek of 1 Peter is not perfect. As much as it stands out among the New Testament, it still is not as good as the preface that Luke provides to his account of the Gospel nor is it Atticist. It is still Koine Greek, a compound descendant influenced by diverse states and

customs over time. It entirely lacks the word ἄν, a sign some have said shows that the author was not a native Greek.

As a last point, someone who doesn't trust in God may say that we can see 1 Peter is a composition (multiple works joined together) and so say that any debate over authorship is pointless because we know that it isn't by one author. This would be a challenging argument to refute, if even the most skeptical scholars didn't accept that 1 Peter is a unified work. The best case for a break in 1 Peter is between 4:11 and 4:12. As with other letters in the New Testament, such as Romans, scholars have argued that an "Amen" at the end of a doxology is the original ending of an earlier work that was edited and expanded to make what we now have in the canon. Particularly, in the case of 1 Peter 4:11 is said to be the end of a baptismal sermon which was filled out later on. This is a great dream, but it means nothing in reality. The suffering is not just potential before the break and present after the break. Baptism is merely alluded to most times and not the dominant theme. The most telling fact, however, is that scholars still can't agree after over half a century on when a baptism would take place in 1 Peter if it were a composition.

In summary:

- Peter could have learned Greek. He had the time, motivation, access, and exposure to.

- Silvanus could have assisted in the composition of 1 Peter, resulting in better Greek. This is not the best solution.
- Peter could have already known Greek from his job before following Christ. This solution lacks faith.
- Compared to writings outside of the New Testament, the Greek of 1 Peter is good but not amazing. It can hardly be called unattainable.
- There are many unknowns about Peter's life. We won't know his interaction with Greek beyond the Bible.
- There is no evidence that 1 Peter is a composition. It was written all at once.

In this section I have set out to show that good Greek cannot be a barrier to Peter's authorship of 1 Peter. In fact, it would have made sense for him to use it. Such a small obstacle couldn't stop the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

2. Peter's lifetime would have been too early for the closing reference to Babylon.

I will now address where 1 Peter was written from. This is not such a difficult task as it has been made out to be. We know that the actual Mesopotamian Babylon was in ruins in the first century. There's also a military outpost in Egypt called Babylon, but no one has been so eccentric as to suggest Peter wrote 1 Peter from there. This means "Babylon" must be symbolic for another location.

In contrast, Babylon has been associated with Rome ever since early Christian tradition. This is seen most clearly in Revelation. Even if this work is given a late pseudonymous date in the 90s, it is certain that this identification came out of a broader tradition that existed prior to the 90s. However, many say that this parallel between Rome and the Babylonian Empire could only have been made after the sack of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. It is this point that needs to be addressed. First we turn to the evidence for both locations:

For Babylon:

- Babylonian rule of Jerusalem began in the summer of 605 B.C. This was the first capture of Jerusalem which Daniel was taken captive in.

- In 601 B.C. Jehoiakim rebelled against the Babylonians after they had been badly weakened by the Egyptians in a battle that same year. On April 16, 597 B.C., Jerusalem surrendered to the siege Babylon put on in response. This resulted in Jehoiakim's son Jehoiachin, who was then the king, and his court being taken captive to Babylon along with the skilled craftsmen. This is when the existence of a Hebrew exile is considered to begin.
- Later in August of 594 B.C. Zedekiah began to plan a revolt against Babylon. (It was during Zedekiah's reign that Ezekiel began to prophesy in exile.) After he did, Babylon began a siege on Jerusalem on January 27, 589 B.C., causing famine. Jerusalem's walls fell to Nebuchadnezzar's forces on July 29, 587 B.C. The city and Temple were destroyed on August 28, 587 B.C. (2 Kings 25:8).

For Rome:

- Jerusalem was captured under Pompey in 63 B.C. He left the treasure in the Temple.
- In 40 B.C., after the death of Herod the Great's father, Herod the Idumaean, usurpers took Jerusalem in the spirit of re-instituting Hasmonean rule.

- Herod the Great, when establishing his rule as a client king, besieged Jerusalem in 37/6 B.C. After 55 days both of the walls were breached.
- In A.D. 6 Judas the Galilean led a revolt against Roman taxation.
- Under the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41-54) a famine occurred in around 46-48 A.D. which was prophesied by Agabus (Acts 11:28). This is also recorded by Josephus in his *Antiquities*, 20.2.
- After a revolt from the Jews started in 66 A.D, Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D. under forces commanded by Titus. This included the Temple. This was the first of what would be three Jewish wars.

The information above is only a partial picture of these periods, but it will suffice to show my point.

Peter, who knew Christ's teaching that no stone would be left on stone, but that instead Christians should be living stones, would have seen his place in history. It was well known that Israel was under Roman rule during Christ's life. Peter also knew that the Temple was going to be destroyed. Therefore, Peter would have seen himself as sitting in the interlude that we read about in 2 Kings between 605 B.C. and 587 B.C. There are many similarities beyond the final complete destruction:

There was an initial period of subjugation to a great power while retaining some autonomy. There were multiple revolts within these periods of subjugation which caused some of the people to be taken into exile. Both experienced famine. Finally, Peter knew Rome would destroy the Temple like Babylon did, except through prophecy instead of through history.

Therefore, because we know Peter's mention of Babylon is symbolic, and that he could have seen the historical parallels between Rome in his time and Babylon in the prophets', it only makes sense to say that Peter is writing from Rome.

There is a final complication that needs to be addressed. 1 Peter prominently features exile. In fact, Peter calls the Christians he is writing to "exiles," or, in some translations, "aliens." If Peter's perspective is before the destruction of Jerusalem, how can there be exiles? This is easily solved once again by looking back at 2 Kings and the consequences of Roman conquest. Both sieges and attacks caused exiles as documented earlier. This is the simple fact of instability. Therefore, Peter saw this parallel between his time and the Babylonian siege and used it figuratively to a Christian's understanding of life.

In summary:

- The mention of Babylon has to be symbolic.

- There is a Christian tradition that identified Rome with Babylon. This, however, may be after the destruction of the Temple if one holds to a late date for Revelation.
- Peter knew that he was living under Roman Rule and that the Temple would be destroyed from Christ's prophecy.
- He was therefore able to compare his time to the similar interlude under Nebuchadnezzar before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. happened.
- Many became exiles under these changes and before the complete destruction. Peter applied this similarity figuratively to Christians.

I am surprised no one has seen just how similar the progress of the Babylonian sieges and the Roman sieges were. Because Christ made a prophecy about the Temple's destruction, it makes complete sense to think of Rome as Babylon after that point. In addition, this proof has not even taken into account that after he rose from the dead, Jesus explained all of his teachings to the Apostles. Certainly the destruction of the Temple would have been one of them.

3. If the letter is from Rome, why do Peter and Silvanus not mention Paul to the Gentile audience?

This question requires some clarification. The issue is not that Peter did not mention Paul while Paul was staying in Asia Minor during the composition of 1 Peter. Nor is the issue that Peter and Paul are in Rome together and Peter does not mention Paul to his readers. These are both nebulous questions as shown below.

We do not know when Peter arrived in Rome. The last mention we have of him is of Antioch in A.D. 49. Therefore, we cannot know exactly when 1 Peter was written from Rome and where Paul was at the time. This question is instead asking why Peter does not mention Paul due to his great influence in the Church no matter where he was at the time.

Many take Peter not mentioning Paul as grounds for pseudonymity. But 2 Peter does indeed refer to Paul, which they then add as evidence that it too is pseudonymous. Clearly this ridiculous conflict means that we cannot take the mention of a fellow apostle alone as a sign of authenticity or not. Then the letters that Paul wrote that scholars call undisputed (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, Philemon), would be fractured apart. Some of these mention an apostle, while others do not.

Their argument then is really that we would expect Peter to mention Paul in 1 Peter and we would expect Peter not to mention Paul in 2 Peter. Again, the mention of a fellow apostle cannot be the determining factor of authenticity just by itself. What those who use it as evidence are really saying is that we would expect the opposite of what we see: a mention where there is not one and no mention where there is.

But there is no way to determine when or why Peter would mention Paul in 1 Peter. We cannot even do that for a tailor-made pseudonymous author! Here are the facts for the locations of these men:

- **Peter:** We do not know when Peter arrived in Rome. He maybe went there twice. The earliest he could have permanently settled there is A.D. 49. We do know, however, that he was martyred there by A.D. 67 or 68 with Paul.
- **Silvanus:** From Silvanus helping to write 1 and 2 Thessalonians, we think he was in Corinth in A.D. 50 or 51 and Ephesus in A.D. 52. His presence there seems to be confirmed by Paul's mention of him in 2 Cor. 1:19. This is the latest information we have for him outside of 1 Peter.

- **Paul:** We do have the places and years for Paul's travels until his death. He first arrived in Rome in March 58, one of the years his first Roman imprisonment is said to have begun in.

- **Mark:** As for Mark, the last mention of him in Acts is 15:39 when he and Barnabas head to Cyprus in A.D. 49. He is also mentioned in Col. 4:10, which was written when Paul was imprisoned in Rome for two years (Acts 28:30 and Col. 4:18). This has been dated as A.D. 58-60, A.D. 60-62, or A.D. 61-63. Mark is also mentioned in 2 Tim. 4:11. Second Timothy was written from Rome during Paul's second Roman imprisonment. This has been given the range A.D. 64 to 67, the last year Nero was on the throne. It was sent to Ephesus, where Timothy was a leader. In it Mark is said to not be with Paul in Rome. Mark is also mentioned in Phlm. 24, however, there is debate as to where this letter was written from. We do know it was sent to Colossae (Col. 4:9). With Paul's mention of visiting soon and the fact that he spent years in Ephesus, it seems that it was written from there. This puts Philemon in the middle of the A.D. 50's.

- The points above assume all mentions of a Mark in the New Testament are the same man, creating the

narrowest window for 1 Peter to be written in. This makes the proof of 1 Peter's authenticity the hardest.

- All of this information means that we can say Mark was in Rome sometime during Paul's two-year imprisonment, he was not in Rome sometime between A.D. 64 and 67 but was requested to come there.

All of the above information means that we cannot say for certain that if Peter were in Rome he would mention Paul to readers in Asia Minor. This is because the information above shows that there are holes in their contact. This means that 1 Peter could have been written during one of these periods when Paul was absent, causing the argument for 1 Peter's pseudonymity to not be irrefutable.

The dates for 1 Peter's composition are narrowed by the fact that Mark, Silvanus, and Peter all need to be in Rome at the same time:

- Peter could have been in Rome any time after A.D. 49.
- Silvanus could have been in Rome any time after A.D. 52.
- Paul was imprisoned in Rome for two years within A.D. 58-63 and was martyred there in the winter of 67-68.

- Mark was in Rome at some point during Paul's two-year imprisonment and was not in Rome at some point during his second imprisonment.

If we add the assumption that Peter would certainly mention Paul if they were in Rome together, this means that 1 Peter could theoretically not have been written

- Before A.D. 52 (or even A.D. 55)
- During Paul's imprisonment in Ephesus
- During Paul's first Roman imprisonment
- During Paul's second Roman imprisonment

This leaves many years still open between A.D. 52 and 68. It is precisely these years that allow Silvanus and Mark to be in Rome with Peter. We also know that during this time Paul was anywhere but in one place, and so they may not have mentioned him out of uncertainty. In contrast, the assumption that Paul would have mentioned Peter in Romans is well-founded on the fact that Peter would be mentioned if he were 'in residence' at that specific location. Some may say that Clement mentions Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cle. 47:1), Ignatius to the Ephesians (Ign. Eph. 12:2) and Polycarp to the Philippians (Pol. Phil. 3:2, 9). Here it is important to remember that 1 Peter is a circular letter. In contrast to addressing specific congregations and their

identity, this form of letter would have needed to have been applicable and comforting to all the Christians mentioned. When considering the number of *regions*, not congregations, mentioned, it is no surprise that not all of them were founded by Paul. In light of this fact, it makes sense for Peter not to mention Paul as it would create a division in the identities of the congregations which he was trying so hard to unify in the face of persecution.

In summary:

- The argument here for pseudonymity is that Peter would have mentioned Paul. This assumes we know all his intentions and all four men's locations.
- 1 Peter had to be written when Peter, Mark, and Silvanus were in Rome and Paul was not.
- Based on the information in the New Testament this leaves many years between A.D. 52 and 68.

Therefore, no one can say we know all of the circumstances of 1 Peter's composition and why Paul would have to be mentioned. The same goes for Silvanus. It is important to remember that all letters are personal and unique.

4. The letter is too much like Paul's.

The argument here is that 1 Peter is pseudonymous because of the uncharacteristic similarities it shares with Paul's writings. Therefore, it was written by a student of Peter who included his teacher's lessons under Peter's name to give the letter apostolic authority. However, this student, due to his later time, was influenced also by Paul because of his assumed great influence and therefore composed in a style closer to Paul's than we would expect from Peter.

The 'Paulisms' that are cited are common expressions such as "in Christ." However, it is still important to determine just how similar the two letters are. First Peter lacks standards of Paul such as justification by faith, which suggests that it is not a direct copy of Paul. First Peter 2:24 and 3:18 mention Christ's death and righteousness, which are considered Pauline, but simultaneously are said to be liturgical, and therefore widespread. This means that they cannot be traced back to an influence from Paul. Some have also thought to compare 1 Peter to the speeches of Peter in Acts. However, these speeches are also very Pauline and cannot give the contrast scholars seek between Peter and Paul.

In fact, it appears that Paul and Peter share the mundane and differ in the notable. This is further evidence for each of their

letters being original and authentic. Indeed, it seems that 1 Peter came first if any borrowing happened as there is no evidence Peter rejected Paul's teachings (he was only ever a coward), and so he would have incorporated them (e.g. the contrast between works and grace and rejection of Israel) if he had access to them.

Those who say that 1 Peter is too Pauline make Peter out to be "a bigoted adherent of Judaism always opposed to Paul." They base their analysis completely on Galatians 2 where Peter and Paul are entrusted with the Gospel to different peoples. In fact, as shown below in the point on Peter writing to the Gentiles, to be entrusted with the Gospel to a group is not as rigid as commonly thought when it is defined Biblically.

It may be helpful to clarify here that I am not trying to argue that no material was borrowed from Paul by Peter. They did spend some time together in Rome, and borrowing may very well be the reason why Romans and Ephesians, which were both composed in Rome, share much with 1 Peter. Yet, these similarities are common themes or Old Testament quotations and cannot be said to be only from Paul. What I am showing is that there is not an unusual or suspicious level of 'Paulisms' in 1 Peter.

What is an even stronger argument, however, is that it is only natural for narrow-minded scholars to think Peter had to borrow from Paul. Thirteen of the twenty-seven books of the

New Testament, that is essentially half, were written by Paul. Who else would we say Peter borrowed from? John, James, and Jude have all already been dismissed as contenders. And who would risk his career by putting forth an author for Hebrews to borrow from?

Despite the evidence that Peter never rejected Paul's teachings, that being entrusted with the Gospel meant being open, and that Peter and Paul only share the common, some still argue that 1 Peter is pseudonymous. They say that pseudonymity better exhorts and comforts. They even say that if the audience knew that Peter was martyred, this would add to the reason to write it under his name. They say that pseudonymity is a therapeutic lie done for the benefit of the congregation. That's fine if one wishes to live in a dream land. But the Church exists in the real world. Is 1 Peter written as a summary of his teaching for comfort? No, it is written as direct communication with apostolic authority. Did Paul ever write impersonally and coldly to the congregations he cared for. No, he always took personal interest in the faith of others. Are the Gospels portrayed to us as written by Christ? No, it is clear that his students wrote it as a compendium of his teaching for the comfort of others through grace. And that is the key. Some texts of Scripture are direct communication and some are presented as records of teaching. Since we know that God presents material in these two ways in

the Bible, why would He make a writing what it was not? Why would 1 Peter be a summary and not a direct intervention? The facts are clear: God does not lie. He presents his Word as it is, otherwise the entire Bible would be a uniform blob.

This also refutes the idea that Peter's name was attached to the letter just to give it apostolic authority. Some say that what really mattered when canonizing was the content. It was the content of disputed texts that were looked at to determine if they really were apostolic. This was the case for 2 Peter, but 1 Peter was never doubted by the Church Fathers who had evidence and testimony which we lack. In fact, Pontus (one of the regions 1 Peter is addressed to) and Rome are known to have had fairly feasible communication between one another in the time of Peter. The death of Peter would have undoubtedly spread across the Christian Church, especially to those places accessible from the site of his death, Rome. Would a grieving church accept a consolatory letter from a dead man as comforting? I cannot see how. At the very least, no church today would find that pleasing at all. It would add insult to injury. And who would deliver such an offensive letter? Would Silvanus, if we take him to be the letter-carrier, pretend to the churches that Peter really did write it, never once grieving with them over the martyrdom of their leader, apostle, and friend? And are we really to expect that this lie was kept up so well that 1 Peter never was questioned by all

the Church Fathers no matter where they were from? The convoluted deceit involved in building the Christian consensus that 1 Peter was written by Peter is so great that it is far more likely that Peter actually wrote it just based on this flawed thinking alone. Again, if it were a comforting compendium of the lessons of a dead man, 1 Peter's introduction would be like the next most similar work we have ever known: those of the Evangelists. It would read: "The Teachings of Peter, According to Mark/Silvanus/etc."

If that evidence is not enough, there is more. There are in fact other pseudonymous works that claim Peter as their author. These are The Apocalypse of Peter, The Gospel of Peter, The Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter, The Arabic Apocalypse of Peter, the Letter of Peter to Philip, and the Letter of Peter to James. Not a single person believes that even one of these was written by the apostle. The Devil can smack Peter's name on whatever lie he may please, but God has defended his church and not allowed these works to enter the canon or to masquerade as truth.

A final argument is put up against Peter's authorship of 1 Peter. If Peter wrote it, which would have to have been before his death in A.D. 68, why does Ignatius of Antioch not mention it in his tours of the areas it was sent to? This question assumes the survival of Peter's letters at the churches they were sent to

because they are in the canon. However, based on 2 Peter's mention of Paul's letters, not letter, and Paul's appeal to Timothy for his notebooks, it seems that Paul's letters were preserved in a personal archive of his correspondence as was common practice in the first century. Perhaps after this practice was introduced to Peter, he kept a similar archive. Upon both of their deaths, the archives of the letter were collected and copied. While there is no evidence that Peter actually did this, the fact that Paul did at the very least says that Peter's letters did not have to survive in the churches when Ignatius visited to then be put in the canon. On top of this, too, is the assumption that Ignatius' report was comprehensive. What builds the kingdom of God in our time did not necessarily in his.

In summary:

- Scholars claim 1 Peter is pseudonymous because it is said to have too many similarities with Paul's letters. These are in fact limited because:
- Peter and Paul share the common and differ in the notable.
- Peter was a coward, but there is no evidence he rejected Paul's teachings. He too converted Gentiles. This openness certainly applied to his written ministry.

- Peter still could have borrowed from Paul without having made 1 Peter inauthentic. The best case is for borrowing from Romans and Ephesians, yet this is actually comforting since, if it is true, it shows that Peter and Paul labored together in the Christian cause when they were united again. This is what we would expect from apostles.
- The Bible presents some texts as written by the teacher and some as records of those teachers. Why would God lie when he presents his Word in diverse ways?
- Pseudonymity would be found out by Peter's readers very quickly. It would also destroy the entire purpose of the letter.
- No other work that claims Peter as its author, except 2 Peter, is accepted as authentic.
- 1 Peter did not need to survive to have Ignatius mention it. It could have been in an archive like Paul's letters and other first-century men of letters.

The evidence of Paul's influence in 1 Peter has been said to make the author one who was "steeped in early Christian tradition." And who better fits that description than Peter himself?

5. Peter's mention of elders is out of place because Paul never mentions elders in his churches.

There is not much to this argument, yet it is important to address it since a mustard seed grows into a tree. The argument is one that is based on similar flawed thinking that forms the basis of the argument that 1 Peter is too much like Paul's writing, that is, it is one that picks apart words. The question is why does 5:1 mention presbyters, which we never hear about from Paul? In addition there is no mention of bishops or deacons, just elders.

First, it has to be said that this argument assumes presbyters were introduced in the late first century. This is the scholarly date for the Pastoral Epistles. "Elder" or "elders" appears in Acts, 1 Timothy, Titus, and James. Since they are assumed to have been written in the late first century and to not be by Paul, then 1 Peter is a complete outlier if it were written some thirty years earlier. This, they say, means that 1 Peter is pseudonymous. Though, when laid out like this, one can easily see just how absurd this argument is. If we throw out all the evidence in the Bible we don't like, then of course we can make an argument that 1 Peter is strange. In a recent work on Biblical chronology, the chronology of Paul's life and letters is easily worked out to include the Pastoral Epistles. There are no weird, forced dates or locations. They easily belong.

However, even if one were to agree that the Pastoral Epistles were not written by Paul, whose to say that 1 Peter is an outlier? After all, scholars continually stress how incomplete our evidence from the New Testament is. They often say that we cannot answer all the questions we have. This has led to a whirlwind of "probablies," "maybes," and "possiblies" in papers and books. We just cannot definitely say. So why not apply this reluctance to 1 Peter's use of "elders" in 5:1? The same is true for the omission of bishops or deacons.

In summary:

- 1 Peter 5:1 is said to be an outlier in its mention of elders because of the assumption that the Pastoral Epistles were written in the late first century.
- This is throwing out evidence that one doesn't like from the Bible

6. Peter should not have written to the Gentiles but only to the Jews.

We know at the very least that some of the readers of 1 Peter were Gentiles (2:10 and 4:3). This means the first half of this attack stands. The second half, that Peter could only minister to Jews, is based on Gal. 2:8-9 where Peter and Paul agree to go separate ways. This half also stands. So where is the discrepancy?

First we should review some of the previous explanations:

- Some have suggested that these readers of Asia Minor were under the influence of Rome at this time while the other Christians of the Mediterranean were influenced by Antioch. They say that this is why Peter and not Paul wrote 1 Peter.
- Others have tried to pull the rug out from under this argument and say that apostolic authority gives Peter the right to minister to Jew and Gentile. They say that he had the same claim upon Asia Minor as Paul.

Some background: (1) Peter would have known some of these congregations from Pentecost. Clearly some of the new converts spread the Faith back home. They communed and communicated with Peter, trusting in his authority and leadership from Christ. Of course, these were Jews. (2) What

also needs to be recognized, however, is that Paul established most churches by preaching the Good News to a synagogue and then built out from a Jewish core, "as was his usual habit" (Acts 17:2). This was likely how these congregations in Asia Minor were formed. The possibility of Jews being from these regions is confirmed by the listing at Pentecost and Acts 18:2. (3) Finally, Gentiles were present at these congregations as already said.

This argument hinges on what it means to be entrusted with the Gospel (Gal. 2:8). I will not argue here that it means something else than to proclaim the Good News to the unconverted and to later sustain them when trouble comes.

The solution is in fact to look at the other side of the coin of Gal. 2:9. We need to ask what Paul was doing when he was entrusted with the Gospel to the Gentiles. His ministry is the most complete of any of the apostles and will show us what it means to be entrusted with the Gospel to a certain group. Then we can look back at 1 Peter and see if Peter also lived out that entrustment in the same way.

This is the key: Paul wrote letters to Jews. Many understand that Paul's letter to the Romans was written to settle a conflict that arose between Jews and Gentiles after the Jews were allowed to return to Rome. If that is not convincing, Timothy is explicitly said to be a Jew, and his ancestry is given (2 Tim. 1:5) Therefore,

Paul wrote to both Jew and Gentile. Paul also converted many Jews as was already noted.

All this means that Paul, who was entrusted with the Gospel to the Gentiles, converted and wrote to Jews. This was part of his broad mission to the Gentiles.

In addition, we know that Peter converted (Acts 10) and ministered to Gentiles (Gal. 2:12 and maybe 1 Cor. 1:12).

We now have an answer to what it means to be entrusted with the Gospel to a certain group. It means to primarily work among those who God has entrusted you to spread the Good News to, while also remaining open to the call of the Holy Spirit to interact with others.

Putting it all together, Peter, who was entrusted with the Gospel to the Jews, understood that this meant ministering to the Gentiles as part of his broader mission. He also had authority in Asia Minor among Jews going back to Pentecost. There are also known to have been Jews among the readers of 1 Peter, meaning 1 Peter was within Peter's broader mission.

In summary:

- There were Jews among the readers of 1 Peter.
- Peter had authority in Asia Minor from Pentecost.

- Even though Paul was entrusted with the Gospel to the Gentiles, he converted and ministered to Jews.
- Even though Peter was entrusted with the Gospel to the Jews, he converted and ministered to Gentiles.
- Therefore, to be entrusted with the Gospel to a certain group does not mean just interacting with that group alone.
- The Holy Spirit calls us to many places and situations we cannot anticipate.
- 1 Peter fits the Biblical definition of entrusting the Gospel to the Jews. Both Peter and Paul were aware of the continuity of the People of God from the Old Testament to the New Testament in their work.

When instituting ministry, Christ does not define everything so black and white. Paul and Peter's missions are proof of that. May we be open to the call of God as they were.

7. The references to Jesus and his teachings lack the originality of one who personally knew him.

This argument takes two approaches, saying that (1) Peter does not reference Jesus's key and memorable teachings, such as his parables and that (2) Peter never introduces a quote with "Jesus said…" or something similar in a fluid way.

This argument says that Peter *should* have done these things. He should have explicitly referenced the parables and he should have said "Jesus said…" in a fluid way. Therefore, this argument can be refuted by showing that these may not be assumed and that they in fact occur.

First it will be helpful to compare Peter's letters to John's. Whether or not one thinks that they are pseudonymous, they are clearly the closest writings to one another in either case as they are all catholic epistles. This means that the fact that John's letters also lack what is called originality in mentioning Jesus is significant. Why would we expect one thing from one letter and not it from another? Although this fact does not make the claim that 1 Peter is authentic irrefutable, it does mean that the Johannine and Petrine epistles are either both authentic or both pseudonymous, corroborating the argument for 1 Peter's authenticity later on.

In the face of this they turn to 1 Corinthians 7:10, 25 where Paul mentions the Lord. What they miss, however, is that 1 Cor. 7:10 is not a quote and verse 25 is simply a recognition that there is no specific command or teaching from Christ on the matter in question. Some then cite 1 Corinthians 11:24 where Paul does indeed quote Jesus's own words. Yet this is clearly anything but a fair comparison because Paul is talking about the institution of the Lord's Supper -- a place where Christ's words have a fair bit of meaning.

In addition, it is difficult to determine where the words of Jesus would come from in 1 Peter. They certainly could have come from the writings of the Evangelists if one allows that early of a date, but they may also have been from early tradition (as said above) or even from his own memory. This last point seems to be in the mind of those who expect personal flashbacks to Christ's life on earth. However, all of the claims that 1 Peter has unoriginal reminiscences have to rely on the Evangelists. But the Evangelists were not writing in the same way Peter was. We know that they were writing to record the history of the Gospel for believers in Christ. Peter was writing to comfort Christians who were mocked and ridiculed. These are different ministries with different gifts. Should we be surprised that they employ Scripture and Jesus's words differently? Therefore, how certain may we be of Peter's deviance?

They also expect eloquent personal reminiscences of Jesus in 1 Peter, but this would hardly be comforting to those in trying times. When Christians seek comfort from their pastors, do they want long personal digressions? No, they want the caring Word. Peter would not have haphazardly composed a letter to those Christians in need in Asia Minor. To minister effectively, Peter could not be caught up in himself. He couldn't and wouldn't show off how much he knew Jesus and his own words.

In fact, Peter is no slouch in his references to Jesus. They are simply not quotations introduced with "Jesus said..." Take the following parallels, a sample of those found in 1 Peter:

1 Peter	**Parallel**
1:13	Luke 12:35
2:12c	Matt. 5:16
3:9	Matt. 5:44
3:14	Matt. 5:10
4:14	Luke 6:22
3:16	Luke 6:28
4:10f.	Luke 12:42

What else does this say than that Peter was steeped in the Word and that he shared the Word with Christians in need? The question underlying this point's argument is really "What does it mean to be an apostle?" Does it mean explicitly quoting Jesus

at every opportunity because that builds up faith? That would not be effective for Peter's care to persecuted Christians. When under attack, the comforting teaching (1 Pet. 3:14 and Matt. 5:10) is the balm. Peter shows himself to diligently apply this at every outcry. This is proof enough of apostolic authorship.

In summary:

- The argument is that we should see explicit references and quotations of Jesus.
- Doubt is cast on this claim because this practice does not happen in John's catholic epistles. However, it could be that both John and Peter are pseudonymous.
- Any argument that Paul quotes Jesus so Peter should too is illogical because Paul does this when recalling the institution of the Lord's Supper, a moment without equal gravity in 1 Peter.
- All of the claims that 1 Peter is pseudonymous because it does not explicitly quote Jesus' words are paradoxically based on a comparison of 1 Peter's words with those recorded by the Evangelists. This is then paired with the assumption that Peter's words had to come from his own mind for originality. So naturally there will be a mismatch.

- Finally, it is not as if Peter does not apply the balm, the Word, to Christians' sufferings. In doing this 1 Peter shows great signs of apostolicity.

So do not say that St. Peter should have written: "Jesus told me: "You are blessed when you suffer.' And so are you all." This separates Peter from those he is caring for. The Spirit, in His wisdom, led Peter to say: "It is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil."

8. Peter would have written the letter under his given name, Simon.

Because this argument relies on the formation of names, it is important to first review Peter's names.

Peter's given name was Simon. Which is also occasionally spelled as Simeon (sometimes found in Acts 15:14 and 2 Peter 1:1). He was given the name "the Rock" by Jesus, which is given as Cephas or Peter in the New Testament. Cephas comes from the Aramaic כֵּיפָא for rock, while Peter comes from the Greek πέτρα for the same.

Statistics tell us that the name Peter was largely preferred over Simon or Cephas.

In the New Testament:

Name	Simon/Simeon	Peter	Cephas
Occurrences	55	174	9

Of the documents known to have been written before A.D. 68:

Name	Simon/Simeon	Peter	Cephas
Occurrences	1	8	3

Even if we subtract the two instances of Peter in 1 and 2 Peter, the statistics are overwhelmingly in favor of Peter being called Peter over Simon.

In addition, because Peter is writing as an apostle, it would only make sense for him to use the designation given to him by Christ. Here he chooses "Peter" over the rarer equivalent "Cephas".

In summary:

- Peter's name comes from the Greek or Aramaic words for "rock".
- The name Peter occurs far more than Simon or Cephas when looking at the entire New Testament or those writings known to be from before A.D. 68.
- Peter wrote under the name given to him by Christ because he was aware he was ministering apostolically.

Unfortunately, there is not much here to argue against. Peter chose to write under the name of Peter because that was the apostolic name Christ gave him. It seems that this argument is put forth in a desperate attempt to claim 1 Peter is pseudonymous. The logic seems to be that Peter had no apostolic authority to write to a Gentile region as he was entrusted with the Gospel to the Jews. Therefore, he should

have used the name Simon not Peter. However, I have already shown that the readers of 1 Peter were well within his authority as listed in Galatians 2. There is no reason for him not to have used Peter.

9. Peter refers to persecutions which only happened after his lifetime.

Those who question Peter's authorship of 1 Peter reference 4:12-19 and 5:6-9 to show that wide-spread persecution of Christians happened when 1 Peter was written. They argue that these did not happen during Peter's lifetime. Instead, they have in mind those that happened under Vespasian (r. A.D. 69-79), Domitian (r. A.D. 81-96), and Trajan (r. A.D. 98-117), all of which postdate his traditional death in A.D. 68.

Even Pliny the Younger writes to Trajan in A.D. 113 about trying and condemning Christians if they will not recant. Trajan was the model emperor and kept up a good administration, yet in his reply he does not refer to any previous empire-wide persecutions and certainly would have had his clerical slaves check the case records. Therefore, we can say that there was no wide-spread persecution of Christians before A.D. 113. Instead, Pliny the Young and Trajan were concerned about *collegia*, or associations, which were similar to a guild or union. The elite were always scared when the commoners gathered together, which is what happened when associations met. This is testified by the very late date for any permanent amphitheater in the Roman Empire.

"But what about Nero's persecution?" you might ask. It is true that we know of Nero's heinous actions against the Christians, and they were during Peter's lifetime. However, these were confined to Rome and would not have affected Peter's readers in Asia Minor. Therefore, we cannot rely on them to solve this issue. They were not widespread.

The key is that Peter in fact does not mention persecution but verbal abuse, threats, and exclusion (2:12, 15, 19-20; 3:9, 16; 4:4, 14). His comfort and exhortation are not about martyrdom but about how a Christian is an outcast each day. The Bible rightly has many passages about witnessing to Christ until death. But God has also provided us with what staying true to him looks like day by day.

Because 1 Peter is not about persecution in the extreme, this ninth point is mute. Christians throughout the ages, even in countries that claimed to be Christian, have suffered just as Peter has described here. Ever since Christ gave the Great Commission Christians knew exile. This certainly happened during Peter's lifetime and there is no reason we should think it did not happen in Asia Minor. Therefore, the dating of persecutions has no bearing on the authenticity of 1 Peter.

In summary:

- It is true no empire-wide persecution occurred in Peter's lifetime.
- However, 1 Peter is not about lethal persecution but about becoming an outcast or an exile.
- Verbal abuse, threats, and exclusion are known to have been enacted against Christians since Creation. They therefore certainly occurred during Peter's lifetime.

If one holds to an early date of Revelation, he could argue that if Peter were referring to lethal persecutions in Asia Minor, they could still occur during his lifetime. I will not bring in Revelation as my goal is to prove the unity of Scripture without forming circular logic. This evidence would not really be consequential anyway because Peter is not writing about martyrdom but exile.

Conclusion

There is no reason for 1 Peter not to have been written by Peter. There still are some other minor points that some say show 1 Peter is inauthentic. They say that Peter should have struggled to apply the Torah to a Christian's life, that there is a provably inauthentic lack of quotations to Mark, the Evangelist associated with Peter, and that the Biblical quotations should have come from an Aramaic or Hebrew source, not the Septuagint. These are the arguments from above rephrased. Peter struggling with the Torah assumes Peter never learned or grew and persists in a bigoted portrayal of his ministry from Galatians 2. This was addressed in point six. When they say that Peter needed to quote from a Hebrew or Aramaic source, they are saying that Peter could not have learned Greek, which was addressed in the first point. Finally, the assumption that the Gospel according to Mark should have been used in 1 Peter is so murky from its circular application of Papias as a foundation, that in the face of all the other positive evidence of 1 Peter's authenticity it can hardly stand.

Anyone who suggests such fantasies does not trust in God and his Word. After all, Peter experienced the risen Lord's teachings, Pentecost, and martyrdom. These all prepared him for service as

an apostle and writer of 1 Peter on top of already favorable historical grounds. Those who suggest that Peter did not write this letter will need to address Peter's name at the start. They try to twist this, but I ask: Do they not trust in God's Word? If they are so faithless, let them pick apart the works of the faithless. There is no need to pollute the crystal-clear water of life.